

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000341

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: AKASHI SEES PROGRESS POSSIBLE BETWEEN LTTE AND GOVERNMENT

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 478 (B) OSLO 186

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reason 1.5 (d).

This cable contains an action request: see para
[10](#).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: Akashi found LTTE's Tamilchelvan less aggressive than expected, and believes negotiations on a joint mechanism for tsunami reconstruction can resume. President Kumaratunga said she was eager for an agreement. Each side blamed the other for delays. Akashi thinks a Co-Chair Ambassador statement urging quick conclusion of an agreement would be useful. END SUMMARY

[12](#). (U) Government of Japan Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi briefed other Co-Chairs February 13 at the conclusion of his visit to Sri Lanka. He discussed in particular his meeting with the LTTE's Tamilchelvan and his dinner with President Kumaratunga.

Tamilchelvan Calm

[13](#). (C) In a break from normal practice, Akashi met Tamilchelvan in an LTTE-controlled area near Batticaloa in the east rather than in the Tiger "capital" of Kilinocchi. Akashi said he was surprised at Tamilchelvan's calm demeanor. Tamilchelvan strongly condemned the recent killing of LTTE Battil political chief Kausalyan, and "strongly suggested" that the Government or associated parties (Tamil paramilitary groups) were involved. He did not say that the Government carried out the killing, but said that at least the Government should have known what was going on in its area. He cited paragraph 1.8 of the Ceasefire Agreement, which obligates the government to disarm paramilitaries. Nonetheless, Akashi said, Tamilchelvan did not raise his voice much and did not say that the Tigers would stop the negotiations with the Government on a mechanism for delivery of tsunami assistance in the North and East. Tamilchelvan accused the Government of procrastination on this process.

[14](#). (C) Akashi pressed Tamilchelvan several times on the importance of the negotiations on the mechanism. When he asked Tamilchelvan directly if he was hopeful, Tamilchelvan said "Yes." LTTE negotiator on this subject Pulidevan was slightly warmer, and said that he was planning to travel to Colombo on Feb 14. Akashi said that overall he was "cautiously optimistic" that agreement on the mechanism could be reached. Akashi noted that the LTTE was quite clear that the mechanism would only apply to the tsunami-affected areas -- perhaps some two kilometers in from the coast. Akashi felt this was so the Tigers would not appear to be giving up on their Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal.

President Says LTTE Delaying Agreement

[15](#). (C) Akashi had a three-hour meeting and dinner with President Kumaratunga, who was in a very good mood. She was accompanied by Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and Peace Secretariat head/mechanism negotiator Jayantha Dhanapala. Akashi pressed Kumaratunga to conclude the agreement on the mechanism, and she replied that the LTTE was procrastinating, noting that the Government had to wait 10 days for the Tiger Central Committee to meet and consider the proposal. Akashi continued to press for quick movement, telling Kumaratunga that the opportunity for cooperation and confidence building might not return, and the donor community was waiting. Dhanapala said that the

Government also hoped for a quick agreement. He noted that the LTTE had for the first time sent in a written proposal, and that this took more time for the Government to evaluate.
Norway Not Sure Who Killed Kausalyan

16. (C) Ambassador Lunstead asked Norwegian DCM Langried (Ambassador Brattskar was not at meeting) whether the Norwegians and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) had reached any conclusions about government involvement in Kausalyan's murder. Langried said that they had not, and added that the "likelihood is we will never find out." (Note: This contrasts with statements by Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Helgesen in ref b.)

Possible Co-Chair Statement?

17. (C) Akashi asked Ambassador Lunstead to stay behind for a minute after the others left. Akashi said he wanted our opinion on whether a statement by the Co-Chair Chiefs of Mission urging quick agreement on a mechanism would be helpful. This would be intended to put pressure on both sides. This is, Akashi said, an "important juncture" in the peace process. Akashi envisioned a one paragraph statement along the following lines:

"The Co-Chairs urge the Government and the LTTE to capitalize on the new atmosphere created by the tsunami and express their strong hope that ongoing negotiations to establish a joint mechanism for tsunami relief in the North and East will be successful to address the most urgent needs and allow an equitable and rapid distribution of assistance."

18. (C) Ambassador Lunstead responded that this was certainly an idea we could consider. He said he imagined that the Norwegians would opt out on the grounds that they are facilitating the negotiations. Japanese Ambassador Suda was lukewarm about the idea, predicting that the EU would try to fill the statement up with additional material on reconstruction issues. Ambassador Lunstead said he would meet EU Delegation Chief Wilton and visiting EC Director for Asia Fotiadis the following day and would mention the idea.

19. (C) COMMENT: If Akashi's reading of Tamilchelvan and the LTTE is correct, it is a hopeful sign. Ambassador will try to meet Dhanapala in the next few days to get his impressions on where mechanism negotiations are going. As noted above, it is striking to us that the Norwegians here seem much less certain than Helgesen about exactly what happened in the Kausalyan shooting. This reinforced our impression from the Brussels Co-Chairs meeting (ref a) of a somewhat discouraged Helgesen who seems prone right now to lay all problems at the feet of the Government.

110. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: We are not sure Akashi's idea of a Co-Chair Ambassador's statement will move things forward significantly, but it probably would not hurt-- if it can be kept short and simple. Action Request: Department thoughts on this idea.

LUNSTEAD